AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-3, 13-16, 19, 32, and 36 with the following amended version thereof, without acquiescence in the grounds of rejection and without prejudice to pursue the original claims at a later time by continuation application or otherwise. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) A combined bill acceptor and data unit reader, comprising:

a bill acceptor for receiving and validating currency, controlling a mechanical cash input mechanism, and generating digital cash transaction data according to a bill validator protocol;

a host interface; and

a data unit reader electronically interposed between said bill acceptor and said host interface, said data unit reader comprising a digital electronic bill acceptor interface for receiving digital cash transaction data from said bill acceptor according to the bill validator protocol, said data unit reader passing through cash transaction data from said bill acceptor to said host interface according to [[a]] the bill validator protocol when currency is accepted by said bill acceptor, and transmitting cashless transaction data to said host interface according to a different protocol when a data unit is read by said data unit reader.

2.   (Currently Amended) A combined bill acceptor and data unit reader,

comprising:

a bill acceptor <u>for receiving and validating currency, controlling a mechanical</u>

<u>cash input mechanism, and generating digital cash transaction data according to a</u>

<u>bill validator protocol</u>;

a host interface; and

a data unit reader electronically interposed between said bill acceptor and

said host interface, said data unit reader passing through cash transaction data

from said bill acceptor to said host interface when currency is accepted by said bill

acceptor, and transmitting cashless transaction data to said host interface when a

data unit is read by said data unit reader;

wherein said data unit reader comprises a relay across which electrical

signals <u>comprising cash transaction data</u> are transmitted <u>from the bill acceptor to</u>

<u>said host interface according to the bill validator protocol</u>, and wherein said data unit

reader passes through cash transaction data from said bill acceptor to said host

interface when said relay is in a first position, and prevents cash transaction data

from passing through from said bill acceptor to said host interface when said relay is

in a second position.

3.   (Currently Amended) The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader

of claim [[2]] <u>1</u>, wherein said host interface comprises a protocol translator, said

protocol translator converting cash transaction data from a bill validator protocol to a

protocol used by a host device connected to said host interface.

4.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 1, wherein said data unit reader comprises a bill acceptor data interface connected to said bill acceptor, and a microprocessor, said microprocessor controlling the transfer of data between said bill acceptor data interface and said host interface.

5.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 4, wherein said bill acceptor data interface and said host interface each comprise a universal asynchronous receiver/transceiver (UART).

6.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader unit of claim 1, wherein said data unit reader comprises a smart card reader.

7.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 6, wherein said smart card reader performs an authentication and validation procedure when a smart card is inserted in said smart card reader.

8.   (Canceled)

9.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 1, wherein said host interface is connected to an electronic gaming machine.

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10. (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 1, wherein said data unit comprises a secured internal meter.

11. (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 10, wherein said secured internal meter is contained with a security and authentication module (SAM).

12. (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 1, further comprising a security module interposed between said data unit reader and a host device connected to said host interface, said security module permitting transparent communication between said data unit reader and said host device after completion of an authentication and validation process, and otherwise preventing communication between said data unit reader and said host device.

13. (Currently Amended) A multi-mode card reader, comprising:

a card reader interface;

a bill acceptor interface <u>for communicating with a bill acceptor, the bill acceptor configured to receive and validate currency, to control a mechanical cash input mechanism, and to generate cash transaction data according to a bill validator protocol</u>; and

a card reader controller connected to said card reader interface and electronically interposed between said bill acceptor interface and a host interface, said card reader controller allowing transfer of cash transaction data from said bill acceptor interface to said host interface when said cash transaction data is received from said bill acceptor interface and said card reader controller is in a first mode, said first mode associated with cash transaction processing, and allowing transfer of cashless transaction data from said card reader interface to said host interface when said cashless transaction data is received from said card reader interface and said card reader controller is in a second mode, said second mode associated with cashless transaction processing;

wherein said card reader controller [[blocks]] is programmed to block cashless transaction data from being electronically conveyed via said card reader interface when in said first mode.

14.   (Currently Amended) The multi-mode card reader of claim 13 further comprising a relay across which electrical signals comprising cash transaction data are transmitted from the bill acceptor to said host interface according to the bill validator protocol, wherein said relay passes through cash transaction data from said bill acceptor interface to said host interface when in a first position, and prevents cash transaction data from passing from said bill acceptor interface to said host interface when in a second position.

15.   (Currently Amended)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 14, wherein said host interface comprises a protocol translator, said protocol translator converting cash transaction data from [[a]] the bill validator protocol to a protocol used by a host device connected to said host interface.

16.   (Currently Amended)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 14, wherein said relay switches from said first position to said second position when said card reader interface detects insertion of a portable electronic card, thereby temporarily preventing cash transaction data from passing from said bill acceptor interface to said host interface.

17.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 13, wherein said bill acceptor data interface and said host interface each comprise a universal asynchronous receiver/transceiver (UART).

18.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader unit of claim 13, wherein said card reader interface is configured to read smart cards.

19.   (Currently Amended)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 13, wherein said bill acceptor interface receives said cash transaction data according to [[a B.V.]] the bill validator protocol.

20.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 13, wherein said host interface is connected to an electronic gaming machine.

21.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 13, further comprising a secured internal meter.

22.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 21, wherein said secured internal meter is contained with a security and authentication module (SAM).

23.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 13, wherein when in said second mode, cash transaction data received at said bill acceptor interface is used to credit a card inserted in said card reader interface.

24.   (Previously Presented)   A method for controlling cash and cashless transactions at a combined bill acceptor and card reader, comprising the steps of:

receiving a card at a card reader;

processing data on said card and generating cashless transaction data thereby;

receiving cash at a bill acceptor;

generating cash transaction data in response to the receipt of cash at the bill acceptor;

transmitting said cash transaction data to said card reader;

selecting between at least a cash mode and cashless mode;

when in said cash mode, relaying said cash transaction data to a host device interface; and

when in said cashless mode, transmitting said cashless transaction data to said host device interface.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of switching from a standby mode to said cash mode when cash transaction data is received at said card reader, and switching from said standby mode to said cashless mode when a card is received at said card acceptor.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of adding credit to a card received at said card acceptor in response to receiving cash transaction data at said card reader when in said cashless mode.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said step of relaying said cash transaction data to said host device interface further comprises the step of relaying said cash transaction data to an electronic gaming machine, and wherein said step of transmitting said cashless transaction data to said host device interface further comprises the step of transmitting said cashless transaction data to said electronic gaming machine.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said step of relaying said cash transaction data to said host device interface comprises the step of relaying said cash transaction data via a relay to said host device interface when said relay is in a closed position, and wherein said step of transmitting said cashless transaction data to said host device interface is carried out when said relay is in an open position.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said step of relaying said cash transaction data to a host device interface comprises the step of transmitting cash transaction data according to a B.V. bill validator protocol.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said step of transmitting said cashless transaction data to said host device interface comprises the step of transmitting said cashless transaction data according to a standard gaming protocol.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said step of receiving said card at said card reader comprises the step of receiving a smart card at a smart card reader.

32. (Currently Amended) A combined bill acceptor and smart card reader, comprising:

a bill acceptor configured to receive and validate currency, to control a mechanical cash input mechanism, and to generate cash transaction data according to a bill validator protocol;

a host interface; and

a smart card reader electronically interposed between said bill acceptor and said host interface, said smart card reader comprising a digital bill acceptor interface for receiving digital cash transaction data from said bill acceptor according to the bill validator protocol, said smart card reader passing through cash transaction data from said bill acceptor to a separate host device microprocessor via said host interface when currency is accepted by said bill acceptor and said smart card reader is in a cash mode, and transmitting cashless transaction data to said host device microprocessor via said host interface according to a cashless protocol when a smart card is read by said smart card reader and said smart card reader is in a cashless mode.

33. (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 32, wherein said smart card reader operates in a plurality of modes including a standby mode, said smart card reader switching from said standby mode to said cash mode when receiving cash transaction data from said bill acceptor, and switching from said standby mode to said cashless mode upon insertion of said smart card.

34.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 33, wherein, when in said cashless mode, said smart card reader adds credit to said smart card upon receiving cash transaction data from said bill acceptor.

35.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 34, wherein said smart card reader temporarily disables said bill acceptor when reading credit information from said smart card.

36.   (Currently Amended) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 32, wherein said smart card reader comprises a relay across which electrical signals comprising cash transaction data are transmitted from the bill acceptor to said host interface according to the bill validator protocol, and wherein said smart card reader passes through cash transaction data in the bill validator protocol from said bill acceptor to said host interface when said relay is in a first position associated with said cash mode, and prevents cash transaction data from passing through from said bill acceptor to said host interface when said relay is in a second position associated with said cashless mode.

37   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 32, wherein said host interface comprises a protocol translator, said

protocol translator converting cash transaction data from a bill validator protocol to a protocol used by a host device connected to said host interface.

38.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 32, wherein said smart card reader comprises a bill acceptor data interface connected to said bill acceptor, and a microprocessor, said microprocessor controlling the transfer of data between said bill acceptor data interface and said host interface.

39.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 38, wherein said bill acceptor data interface and said host interface each comprise a universal asynchronous receiver/transceiver (UART).

40.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 32, wherein said host interface is connected to an electronic gaming machine.

41.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and smart card reader of claim 32, wherein said smart card reader comprises a secured internal meter contained with a security and authentication module (SAM).

42.   (Previously Presented) The combined bill acceptor and data unit reader of claim 9, wherein said cashless transaction data is communicated by said

host interface to said electronic gaming machine according to an electronic gaming

machine protocol.

43.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and data unit

reader of claim 1, further comprising a system interface by which said cashless

transaction data may be communicated to a central computer controlling or

monitoring a plurality of host devices.

44.   (Previously Presented)   The multi-mode card reader of claim 13,

further comprising a system interface by which said cashless transaction data may

be communicated to a central computer controlling or monitoring a plurality of host

devices.

45.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 24, further comprising

the step of transmitting said cashless transaction data via a system interface to a

central computer controlling or monitoring a plurality of host devices.

46.   (Previously Presented)   The combined bill acceptor and smart card

reader of claim 32, further comprising a system interface by which said cashless

transaction data may be communicated to a central computer controlling or

monitoring a plurality of host devices.